



IAS 2013

Kuala Lumpur

Julio Montaner

Closing Speech

Wednesday July 3, 2013

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Thank you Chris. On behalf of my colleagues at the University of British Columbia Division of AIDS and the BC Center for Excellence in HIV/AIDS, we look forward to welcoming you to Vancouver in two years. Chris, I, too, look

forward to furthering our ongoing collaboration and our partnership in the year ahead and I wish to congratulate our immediate predecessors Francoise and Adeeba on this excellent conference. Job well done!

As Chris noted, Vancouver and British Columbia have a long history of developing and researching innovative HIV prevention and care strategies and bringing them to scale.

We have pioneered the use of treatment as prevention.

As a result, we have demonstrated the individual and societal benefits of expanding coverage with highly active antiretroviral

therapy. However, I must caution, this is not just about having HIV testing and ARV treatment available.

Indeed, a comprehensive support strategy needs to be in place to ensure nobody is left behind and all those in need can benefit from these services.

For example, we have shown the critical role harm reduction strategies play in this regard. This includes: InSite, the only legal supervised injection site in North America.

And while we have had tremendous support from our provincial government, we have faced significant and ongoing political challenges from

the Federal government, including legal challenges, all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada.

However, at all times, we have and will remain focused on implementing a science and human rights-based approach to preventing HIV and caring for those who are infected, whatever the challenges. And we continue to see the benefits of staying true to our focus, in terms of lives saved and new infections prevented.

The current pace of scientific progress is exhilarating and the increasing number of large-scale implementation efforts is similarly encouraging. Thus, I believe it is realistic to

hope that we will have further exciting advances to share with each other and the world when we gather in Vancouver in 2015. However, given the continuing economic constraints under which we operate, we must remain vigilant and committed to translating scientific progress into real-life advances for those who are living with and affected by HIV.

The international AIDS community last gathered in Vancouver in 1996 under the banner “One World, One Hope.” That was a pivotal time in the history of our collective response to the pandemic. Let’s hope AIDS 2015 elevates our fight yet to a higher level.

In many ways, our hope for 2015 remains the same. We want all those in need—wherever they live, whoever they love, whatever their drug use history, however they identify, and however they earn a living—to have supported access to the best HIV treatment and care, and the most effective prevention strategies, in a stigma and discriminatory free society.

With this as our focus, we begin the process of planning for IAS 2015 – an opportunity for us to once again direct our energy toward our collective hope for an AIDS-free world.